19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 [177] the Karen are less affected by outside influences, that the use of the drums has been the most prolonged.

534 531 There is considerable difference of opinion among the people of the various sections of the country about the classification of the drums. A writer in the *Rangoon Gazette* divides them into two general groups, the older and the later. He regards the older, more melodious, and more highly prized group as comprising those which have four single frogs, snails, or elephants on their heads. He subdivides this group into three divisions, namely, (1) "Klo ka paw," (2) "Klo ma ti," and (3) "Klo gaw ple." The drums in the first of these subdivisions are the oldest and best-sounding. The second general group, comprising the later and poorer drums, may be subdivided, according to this writer, into five classes, which he names as follows: (1) "Raw tear," (2) "Raw la," (3) "Raw ser," (4) "Raw saw," and (5) "Raw boo." These have four sets of double or triple frogs or elephants on their heads. Each class has its characteristic design, for example, ears of paddy supplying the decorative figure on the "Raw boo" and Karen hand-bags that on the "Raw tear." [1]

534 In the Pegu Hills the drums with the single frogs on the head and no figures down the side are known as the "hot" drums, that is, those which are beaten on occasions of death or disaster. The others, with the superimposed frogs and with elephants and snails down the side, are called "cool" drums, these being used on festive occasions. In Toungoo, however, the people do not appear to make the distinction just mentioned, but use both kinds of drums indiscriminately for festive and sad occasions, such as weddings and funerals, respectively.

534 778 782 That the drums are regarded as sacred objects can not be doubted. In the back districts, where the old customs are still perpetuated, offerings are everywhere made to them. I was informed that during the month of March, 1918, a feast was to be held in honor of certain drums in the village of Pyindaing, Tharrawaddy district, and that offerings were to be made to them, the customary period of seven years having elapsed since the last feast and offerings. I held myself in readiness to attend the celebration, but was finally told that the ceremony had been postponed indefinitely. The account in the *Karen Thesaurus* speaks of the offerings as having

[1] Mr. Po Lin To in the *Rangoon Gazette* of Sept. 27, 1919. I regret that this writer's article appeared after I had left Burma on my furlough. I have not been able, therefore, to identify the designs mentioned by him on any picture or sketch of the few I have with me or that are accessible to me.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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been presented annually. Other sources of information indicate that they might be made at any time, especially on occasions of ca-

[534]

KAREN BRONZE DRUM, NABAAIN VILLAGE, THABBAWADDY DISTRICT
A drum of almost black metal, used for weddings and other festal occasions.

[534]

A "RUNGING" SHOWING THE PATTERN OF THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

lamity or epidemic. As far as I am able to ascertain, these offerings usually consist of food and liquor. In the early times, at least,

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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to withhold such oblations from a drum was to invite the descent of illness and misfortune upon the owner.

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Of the various drums which I have had an opportunity to inspect, I wish to describe two with some fullness, one of these being a "hot" drum and the other a "cool" one. The latter is shown on page 119, and was obtained in 1918 from the Nabaain village tract by Thra Shwe Thee. It is a fine specimen of its class and was used on festive occasions. Its head is twenty-one inches in diameter; its bottom or mouth, sixteen and one-half inches in diameter; its cylinder, fifteen and one-half inches long. The surface of the metal, which is black, is much worn. It has four sets of frogs on the head, each group being composed of three of the creatures, one above another. The frogs are flat and conventional in form. In the center of the head is a large twelve-pointed star, the angles close in between the rays being connected by several arcs, from the outermost of which radiating lines diverge. The points of the star are encircled by nineteen zones, which fill the space to the edge of the rim. These zones are not separated from one another by equal spaces, but fall into five groups. Counting from the center outward, the first three of these groups comprise four zones each, each group being separated from the next one by four concentric circles, while each individual zone is separated from its fellow by three circles in close proximity to one another. The fourth and fifth groups consist of three zones each, four circles separating the two groups and three circles, each zone from its neighbor. The rim zone, on which the sets of frogs stand, is broader than the others, and the edge of the rim is finished with a braided beading.

The ornamental designs contained in the several zones, group by group, are indicated in the following table:

ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS IN THE ZONES ON THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

Group I	*Group II*	*Group III*	*Group IV*	*Group V*
Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching
Circles	Circles	Circles	Plaiting	Plaiting
Plaiting	Plaiting	Hatching	Birds' heads	Diamonds
Birds' heads	Six diamonds, circles, three birds	Six diamonds, circles, three birds		

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XXI

RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS

The Three Conceptions

771 778 Among the Karen we find traces of three distinct religious conceptions, which have left their impress upon the people. The principle underlying the most primitive religious ideas is that of an impersonal power or force residing both in men and things, but which is all-pervasive, invisible except as it betrays itself by its effect on certain things, and invincible in that it can only be overcome in a particular person or thing by a more powerful manifestation of itself in some other object.[1] The Karen designate this force "pgho." It is the equivalent of what the Melanesians know as "mana" and is defined in the *Karen Thesaurus* as a certain more or less unknown force believed to be all about and which can not be overcome.[2] It may reside in certain individuals who, by its aid, are enabled to accomplish unusual tasks. It can be imparted to objects which, by its power, become charms potent for good or ill. The deities are said to possess "pgho" and on that account to be able to do wonderful things. It is also spoken of by the people as revealing itself in the infinite attributes of "Y'wa," the eternal God, but this is, of course, an adaptation to Christian teachings. However, it is in the realm of the magic, rather than in that of religion, that this power is particularly exploited. Those who are able to perform magical deeds are called "pgha a pgho," that is, persons of "pgho." [3]

776 The second religious conception attained by the Karen was the animistic. They entered upon this stage of religious belief when they began to assign personal attributes to the various powers about them, conceiving of every unknown force as a more or less distinct personality. Thus, they personified the vegetative force in the crops as the goddess "Hpi Bi Yaw;" they conceived of the agency that brought the dry and rainy seasons (the monsoon in reality, of course,) as two different demons, each ruling in the upper air dur-

[1] This view was first brought to the attention of scholars by Bishop R. H. Codrington in his work, *The Melanesians*, pp. 227 ff. Compare also J. E. Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, pp. 80, ff. for a brief but full discussion of the subject.

[2] The *Karen Thesaurus*, old ed., Vol. III, p. 489.

[3] In speaking of the attributes of "Y'wa" the people say: "Y'wa a pgho a pkhaw." The use of the couplet gives a more finished form of speech.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER XXV

MOUNT "THAW THI." RELIGIOUS CULTS

THE SACRED MOUNT

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In Karen lore mention is often made of the sacred mountain, "Thaw Thi," which was early thought to be identical with the fabulous sacred mountain of the Buddhists, "Myenmo Taung." When, however, Dr. Mason went to Toungoo, he found that "Thaw Thi" was the dominating peak of the range of hills separating the valley of the Sittang from that of the Salween—a peak evidently held in reverence by the Burmese who call it "Nattaung," that is, the mountain of the "nats" or demons. Of this range "Thaw Thi" is the most impressive peak, although it is a thousand feet lower than Mount "Pghaw Ghaw" four miles to the north, which rises to a height of 8,607 feet above sea-level and from which a wonderful view may be had over the surrounding hills. Of these two peaks "Thaw Thi" is thought to be the wife and the more important. Its summit is a wide clear space which, the people believe, is swept clean every morning by the goddess "Ta La," who has her abode there.[1]

Several traditions concerning the mountain suggest that it may have been a place of veneration of the people in its neighborhood. One story connects Mount "Thaw Thi" with the flood that submerged the world, except the ridge along the top "as much as a comb."[2] When the flood receded, the peacock pheasant ("pgho ghaw") alighted on the summit now bearing its name. Another legend represents "Thaw Thi" as being considered the highest mountain in the world, whose sides abound with all kinds of game, these creatures being constrained to render homage to this kingly mountain. Hence, all the beasts and the birds of the air, including the tiger, bear, crocodile, wild dog, dragon, vulture, and adjutant, ascend in procession to do reverence.

[1] See p. 289.

[2] Dr. Mason, who is quoted in MacMahon's *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese*, 242, ff., is authority for this interpretation. A similar meaning was given me in Toungoo, but the spelling of the name of the bird and of the word meaning "as much as" differs a little from that commonly employed. These differences are probably due to local usage.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

Mount "Thaw Thi" also figures in some of the ancient folk-tales of the people. For example, one version of the story of the patriarch "Htaw Meh Pa" locates his home there. The den of the White Python is still pointed out on one side of the mount. It was to this den, according to the tale of "Ku Law Lay" and "Naw Mü E," that the fabulous serpent carried off the latter, whose husband dug holes there in trying to rescue her. These holes are also still shown.

When, in the middle of the nineteenth century, evangelists began to travel in the Toungoo district they discovered that the people living in the villages near Mount "Thaw Thi" indulged in various more or less elaborate rites on the peak. They had leaders or prophets in each village who interpreted the signs and set the time for the annual pilgrimage to the summit, where they sacrificed pigs and buffaloes, made offerings of wood and water, and built cairns of stones. A recent visitor to this spot reports that the cairns may still be seen, as also the broken pieces of the jars and bottles which once held the offerings; but that the paths are now overgrown, inasmuch as the former ceremonies have been long discontinued. Only a few old men recollect the pilgrimages to the summit made in their boyhood days. Some of these say that the people ascended the mountain to await there the appearance of the god, "Y'wa," in order that they might commune with him;[3] while others connect these rites with the Karen goddess, "Ta La," who they say dwelt there and must be propitiated at her own shrine. That "Y'wa" was venerated on the mountain is confirmed by the following poem, which Dr. Mason found in Tavoy, more than three hundred miles from "Thaw Thi" itself:

"'Y'wa' will come and bring the great 'Thaw Thi'.
We must worship, both great and small,
The great 'Thaw Thi', created by 'Y'wa'.
Let us ascend and worship.
There is a great mountain in the ford.
Can you ascend and worship 'Y'wa'?
There is a great mountain in the way.
Can you go up and commune with 'Y'wa'?
You call yourselves the sons of 'Y'wa'.
How often have you ascended to worship him?
You claim to be the children of 'Y'wa'.
How many times have you gone up to worship 'Y'wa'?"

That so conspicuous a peak as Mount "Thaw Thi" should have been regarded as the abiding-place of the great god, "Y'wa," and

[3] Rev. E. W. Blythe, of Toungoo, in *The Rangoon Diocesan Magazine*, (1917) Vol. XXI, No. 11, pp. 90, ff.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

778 become an object of veneration among the Karen is not difficult t understand in view of the prevalence of animism among Orienta peoples. Other great mountains in the East have been reverence by the inhabitants of the region round about.

Religious Cults

792 795 Like the Jews, who two thousand years ago were constantly expecting the Messiah and followed after those who set themselve up as such, the Karen seem to have been ever ready to accept th teachings of some self-constituted prophet. Dr. Judson met wit a person of this sort north of Moulmein in 1832.[4] The names of number of these religious teachers, including a few women, ar known. The founder of one of these cults, which attained a re markable vogue and is known as the "Maw Lay," began his labor in the village of Pli hta, which lies about fifty miles north o Shwegyin, where they still point out the original pagoda and th huge stone steps leading up to it, reputed to have been built by th founder of the sect. The teaching was eclectic, as is generally tru of other cults of this sort, embracing in this case the "Y'wa" an other traditions of the Karen, together with some elements o Buddhism and some of Christianity. The concluding sentence o the myth concerning the incarnation of the reputed author of thi religion relates that when he appeared among the white me he was called Jesus Christ, and that when he appeared among th Karen he was known as "Maw Lay." The new cult originated abou the middle of the last century and spread rapidly into almost ever district where the Karen are found. At one time its adherent seem to have numbered some thousands, and a few of them stil remain. They have a regular form of worship, consisting of a lit urgy, hymns, and offerings of food and water.

Later movements of a similar nature, but more influenced by Christianity, have gained a large following chiefly among the non-Christian Karens, to whose national feeling the leaders have undoubtedly appealed. Conspicuous among these religious leader has been Ko Pisan, also later known as Ko San Ye, who came from Papun or Shewegyin, entered the Baptist Mission, and for some years at the beginning of the present century exercised a considerable influence toward a real religious revival. Later he withdrew from his Baptist connection and started an independent Christian church, which has survived its founder and now has a membership

[4] Dr. Francis Mason, *The Karen Apostle*, p. 96.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
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346. KAREN WITH DECOY-COCK.

Men and women labour out-of-doors till about sixty. The oldest women who can move make their daily journey for water, which is fetched and stored in joints of the giant bamboo. Old men occupy themselves with plaiting mats and baskets, and repairing gear. None are idle. The Karéns are acquainted with the medicinal virtues of many plants, such as bitter barks for ague. But all sickness and misfortunes are ascribed to the *nats*. Offerings and charms are relied on more than medicines. When a person dies, the body is treated with great respect, and every kind of offering is made to propitiate the spirit. The corpse is cremated, and the bones are buried at a place devoted to this use (*ayò-daung*), often at a distance, owing to the migrations of villages. Here a shrine is erected, consisting of a miniature hut, upon which a rude carving of a bird always figures. This symbolizes a mythical creature which conveys the spirit over rivers and chasms on its wanderings. For some time after a death, cotton threads are stretched beside the footbridges for the spirit to pass by on, without meeting the living. A shrine similar to that at the *ayòdaung* is made at a place where two roads cross, and at each shrine the clothing of the deceased, and sometimes new clothing and utensils, are dedicated. It is at funerals that the dreary Karén music is chiefly heard. The tones are very widely contrasted. The dirge is accompanied by the notes of the *pàzi*, a great drum of bronze, cast in the Shan country, in a single piece, though the metal is only the eighth of an inch thick. The *pàzi* is struck on the end with a padded hammer for the deep fundamental tone, and flicked on the side with a stick to bring out harmonics an octave or two higher.

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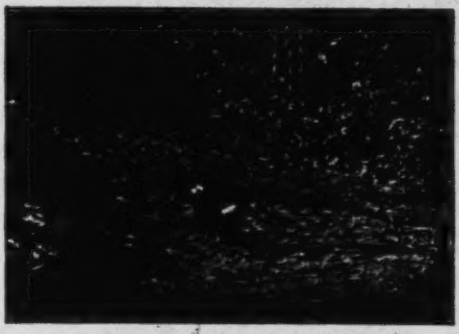

347. DECOY-COCK IN THE CIRCLE OF SHARES.

000 The *Karennî*, or "Red

31: Scherman--30 E-4 (no date) 1915 AP1 Burma

101 Many of them [i.e. Karen, Analyst] have Karen AP7
[797] embraced Buddhism and more especially Christian-
ity. The American Baptist Mission has been most
successful among them and draws trainees for the
missionary and teaching profession from the
Karen. In the distant hill districts the tribes
can still be found in their original civiliza-
tion. There they still build their crude bamboo
[342] huts, often one for several families (21). The

21. Ferrars, ibid., p. 149.

Karenni (meaning red Karen) who live beyond the
British administration zone, but still under
British control, live together with a few kindred
tribes in a separate little state in the southeast
corner of the Southern Shan States--1911:
19,008. They are, without question, least
touched by civilization. Christianity has won
[771] over only a few converts among them; the demon
cult is still the predominant religion. The tall
361 masts, which are erected at sowing and harvesting
[782] time as sacrificial posts for the spirits, indi-
cate from afar the proximity of a Karenni vill-
age. A sturdy fence of bamboo wickerwork usually
encloses the village itself, and most of the time
/Figure 6--Interior of a Taungyo house in Myinka,
near Kalaw./ the individual houses are also
343 fenced in (Plate VII, 1). The grain sheds, which
are small pile structures, stand some distance
away, usually outside the village fence because
of fire hazard. This is a custom which can be
observed among all Indochinese mountain tribes.
This practice is all the more surprising since in
the days when raids, robberies, and tribal feuds
were very frequent just the most valuable posses-
sions were kept outside the fort-like village
enclosures. The grain sheds were secured only
by a wooden bar and were accessible to everybody;
it was even customary to keep also other valuable
343 possessions in these huts. However, the grain shed
● 778 seems to have been revered as holy; it is said that

343 thefts from /216/ the grain sheds are extremely
778 rare (22).

[171] 22. T.C. Hodson reports this about the Naga, The Naga Tribes of Manipur (London, 1911), p. 42, in conjunction with McCulloch.

342 The crudely built bamboo house (Plate VII, 2) has in front a veranda which is reached by a steep ladder; the roof extends over the former (23).

23. A short remark about the Karenni house by A. Fischer, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie /Journal for Ethnology/, Vol. 35 (1903), pp. 991 ff.; the typical veranda of the house which has been reproduced here is completely damaged.

The occupants remain here during the daytime, and here the women keep their weaver's looms and spinning equipment; sometimes one of those [534] large bronze drums (pasi), which the literature mentions so often hang here. They belong to the most highly prized possessions of the Karen, and represent a very substantial barter element for the purchase of wives and similar transactions. The interior of the house contains only one room. [354] In its center is the fireplace with a structure hanging over it. On a bamboo platform, which stands around the entire wall space, are dishes, baskets, etc. The sleeping accommodations, not separated from each other, are in the rear of the room. Ears of corn and millet spikes--the [273] latter are used as an ingredient in the brewing [251] of rice brandy, which plays an important part with all the mountain tribes and also the Shan-- hang from the roof rafters. In between, hang large pieces of pork.